

Tufts University Art Galleries

Tufts University Art Galleries to Open the Most In-Depth Exhibition to Explore the History and Impact of the 1980s Artistic and Political Campaign, *Artists Call Against US Intervention in Central America*

Exhibition to Feature Works by More than 100 Artists, Including Campaign Organizers and Participants and Contemporary Artists Influenced by the Effort

Boston and Medford, MA—June 24, 2021—In January 2022, Tufts University Art Galleries (TUAG) will bring together the work of more than 100 artists in the most in-depth exhibition to explore the seminal 1980s activist campaign, *Artists Call Against US Intervention in Central America*. The campaign sought to educate North Americans and protest U.S. military interventions through a vast array of political and artistic actions across nearly 30 cities. The forthcoming exhibition, titled *Art for the Future: Artists Call and Central American Solidarities*, provides an expansive examination of the development and incredible creative range of the campaign as well as its enduring impact on today’s artists and activists. *Art for the Future* features reconstructions of original art installations, iconic artworks and ephemera—including numerous objects rarely seen since their making—and new and recent works by contemporary artists, including two installations commissioned by TUAG for the exhibition by artists **Beatriz Cortez** and **Naeem Mohaiemen**.

The exhibition will be on view from January 20 - April 24, 2022 and will be presented across TUAG’s two campus locations in Boston and Medford, MA. Each location will have a wide scope of artwork and materials, functioning as complete articulations of the exhibition concept and vision. Grounded in more than five years of research, the exhibition is co-curated by Abigail Satinsky, Curator at Tufts University Art Galleries, and Erina Duganne, Associate Professor of Art History at Texas State University. It is further accompanied by a fully illustrated, bilingual English-Spanish catalogue that features essays by artists and the exhibition curators as well as interviews with Artists Call organizers and new artworks by commissioned artists.

“Artists Call was inspired in part by organizing happening at the time around the University of El Salvador and united a generation of artists in political and artistic activism in ways that continue to have important impacts today,” said Dina Deitsch, TUAG’s Director and Chief Curator. “As a university art gallery dedicated to the vision of artists and their critical roles within our wider global discussions, actions, and policies, TUAG is proud to present a much-needed reassessment of this profound act of solidarity. The exhibition captures the depth of research that underpins TUAG’s curatorial program, and we look forward to engaging our audiences through both the dual presentations at our two locations as well as a compelling roster of academic and public programs.”

Artists Call was grounded in the political organizing of artists and activists such as **Daniel Flores y Ascencio**, **Lucy Lippard**, **Doug Ashford**, **Leon Golub**, and **Coosje van Bruggen** and grew through solidarity networks and community organizing. The conscious-raising effort resulted in exhibitions, performances, poetry readings, film screenings, concerts, and other cultural and educational events, with more than 1,000 artists participating in New York City and many others in cities across the U.S. and Canada. *Art for the Future* captures the history of Artists Call through major works by artists **Josely**

Carvalho, Jimmie Durham, Louise Lawler, Ana Mendieta, Tim Rollins and KOS, Claes Oldenburg, Martha Rosler, Juan Sánchez, Nancy Spero, Zarina, and many others.

Among the highlights of the exhibition is the reconstruction of **Hans Haacke**'s original installation *U.S. Isolation Box, Grenada, 1983*. The artwork recreates the boxlike isolation chambers that American troops used to detain prisoners at the Point Salines airport following the U.S. invasion of Grenada. When it was installed in the street-level lobby of the CUNY Graduate Center, it caused such a controversy that it was briefly moved so that its stenciled inscription was unreadable, after which protests ensued and it was restored. Its presentation in *Art for the Future* marks its first exhibition since being destroyed in 1986. The exhibition also features the original version of *Reconstruction Codex* (1984)—which has not been on view since the 1980s—by **Sabra Moore** and 19 collaborators, including **Emma Amos, Camille Billops, Virginia Jaramillo, Nancy Spero, and Jaune Quick-To-See Smith**, among others. For the work, the artists reconstructed one of the few surviving Mayan codices as a means of paying homage to the ancient Indigenous cultures of Latin America and drawing incisive parallels between historic and contemporary political events in Central America. *Art for the Future* also includes an expansive collection of **Latin American mail art**, including contributions by **Clemente Padin** and **Edgardo Antonio Vigo**, among others.

The exhibition further captures Artists Call's legacy today in new forms of inter-American solidarity networks, visual alliances, as well as artistic and political interventions and actions by a broad range of artists. Themes such as disinformation, socially engaged art and community-building, U.S. military occupations and interventions, and social and political manipulation through the press and popular culture, which formed the core and motivation for the Artists Call campaign, remain relevant and topical today.

“Central American migrants continue to be denied political asylum from ongoing violence, repression, and instability in their home countries, which was caused in part by the interventionist policies of the Reagan administration in the 1980s. This makes returning to the solidarity efforts of Artists Call, in all their complexities and imperfections, matter more than ever,” said Erina Duganne, exhibition co-curator.

To engage further with these subjects, the exhibition features a selection of contemporary voices through artworks by **Antena Aire with Tierra Narrative, Fredman Barahona & Christian Dietkus Lord, Benvenuto Chavajay, Sandra Monterroso, Carlos Motta, and Antonio Serna**. Among the contemporary highlights is **Muriel Hasbun**'s *Arte Voz*, for which visitors to TUAG will be invited to record their heartbeats on a digital stethoscope. The beats will be transmitted to a concurrent display at Centro Cultural de España, San Salvador, where the same opportunity to transmit beats will be available. The project creates a transnational archive of heartbeats between disparate communities, encouraging mutual learning, understanding, and embrace.

The exhibition also features **two works commissioned by TUAG** to reflect and respond to the significance of Artists Call: Artist **Beatriz Cortez** will create a life-sized space and time capsule that collapses different artistic and political trajectories to examine ideas of resilience, solidarity, and creative freedom. Through handcrafted objects, declarations, plans, and letters, Cortez will capture a history that has unfolded and also one that is yet to be told. Artist **Naeem Mohaiemen** will create a film that focuses

on Artists Call participant Judy Blum and her relationships with the effort as well as artists and collaborators Krishna Reddy and Zarina. The film will offer new perspectives on the campaign from the lens of both someone who lived it and someone who has been influenced by it.

“*Art for the Future* is an outgrowth of an ongoing series that I have been curating at TUAG for a number of years that both explores the social and political work of historic artists and invites contemporary artists to reflect on and engage with current happenings and movements. The series captures the ways in which art plays a significant role in motivating engagement with and learning about critical issues of our time. Erina and I see Artists Call as an essential campaign within this broader conversation,” said Abigail Satinsky, exhibition co-curator. “The exhibition is an intergenerational conversation of artists’ mobilizing their collective voice in protest, action, and commitment, and calling on the art world to join in this pursuit. We can learn from these efforts to build different futures.”

Major support for the exhibition and catalogue was provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and the Institute for Studies on Latin American Art (ISLAA).

About the Catalogue

The fully illustrated, bilingual English-Spanish catalogue surveys Artists Call’s mobilization of writers, artists, activists, and artist organizations and looks at the campaign’s legacy today. Contributions include interviews with Artists Call organizers Daniel Flores y Ascencio, Jerry Kearns, Josely Carvalho, Fatima Bercht, Juan Sánchez, Kimiko Hahn, Sabra Moore, and Doug Ashford; critical essays by Lucy Lippard, Yansi Pérez, Kency Cornejo, Abigail Satinsky, Erina Duganne, and Josh Rios; and commissions of new artwork and writing by Muriel Hasbun, Josh MacPhee, Antonio Serna, Beatriz Cortez, and Naeem Mohaiemen. The catalogue places Artists Call within a wider visual, historical, and sociopolitical context and fills a gap in the examination of political and aesthetic actions across the Americas, both then and now. The catalogue is published by Inventory Press & Tufts University Art Galleries, designed by [IN-FO.CO](#), and distributed by ARTBOOK/DAP.

About Tufts University Art Galleries

Tufts University Art Galleries (TUAG) is situated across two locations at Tufts University’s main campus in Medford, MA, and within the School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts (SMFA at Tufts) in downtown Boston. Its dual position within a research university and an art school informs its robust roster of exhibitions and public programs, offering its Tufts community and wider audiences a broad range of perspectives and opportunities to engage with artists, scholars, and innovators. Through research, collecting, and presentation, TUAG furthers the understanding of the critical role of artists and artistic movements within a spectrum of discourses, with a particular focus on today’s pressing cultural and social issues. TUAG is committed to racial and cultural equity; you can learn more about our ongoing work [here](#).

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